

BULLETIN OF
THE NEW YORK ACADEMY
OF MEDICINE



VOL. 65, NO. 10

DECEMBER 1989

WELCOME*

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WELCOME TO THIS Symposium: Nutrition, Children and Health. These proceedings are presented by the Committee on Public Health and the Section on Pediatrics of the New York Academy of Medicine and by the New York State Department of Health. On behalf of these sponsoring organizations, I want you to know how delighted we are that you have come to participate in what will surely prove to be an enjoyable and intellectually stimulating meeting.

The purpose of this symposium is to bring together researchers, clinicians, teachers, and public policy makers to discuss the latest information on the subject of nutrition, children, and health—to identify nutrition related health problems for which prevention and treatment are possible and, most important of all, to suggest specific changes in medical practice and public policy so that the children (and the adults they will become) may enjoy the full benefit of the vigorous application of our scientific knowledge.

Our agenda is as timely as it is important. Quite likely most of you already know that Mario Cuomo, the governor of our state, has declared this to be the decade of the child. But fewer may also know that this academic year of

*Presented as part of a *Symposium on Nutrition, Children and Health*, held by the Committee on Public Health and the Section on Pediatrics of the New York Academy of Medicine and the New York State Department of Health at the Academy March 9, 1989.

1988–1989 marks the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Pediatric Section of the New York Academy of Medicine by Abraham Jacobi. This symposium is a part of that celebration.

I suspect that Dr. Jacobi and his colleagues—Holt, Chapin, Koplik, and all the other pediatric pioneers—would sympathetically understand the challenges we face. After all, in the late 19th century the two overarching issues of child health were infectious diseases and nutrition. These issues challenge us still. Our pediatric forbears had to contend with tuberculosis, peritonitis and meningitis, with diphtheria, whooping cough, and with summer diarrhea. We are faced with the enormous problem of HIV infection and disease. Jacobi and his colleagues struggled with rickets, with infantile scurvy, and with the problem of safely feeding children who could not be breast fed. We are tested by the issues of obesity, iron deficiency, lead intoxication, and early atherosclerosis.

The collaboration of the Section on Pediatrics and the Committee on Public Health in today's program is nicely symbolic too. The history of pediatrics and public health are closely intertwined—but never more closely than in the field of nutrition and child health. One of the great blessings of our society has been the assurance of a safe, inexpensive, and dependable supply of milk. The eventual triumph of pasteurization as a public health measure, the practice of milk inspection and the establishment of milk stations to give clean milk to poor children. These are part of the proud tradition shared by the men and women of public health and pediatrics of this Academy.

I know that most of you identify the name of Nathan Strauss with clean safe milk for all children—and for the world I would not diminish the much deserved glory of that worthy man—but 100 years ago, in 1889—four years before Strauss set up his first milk stations, Dr. Henry Koplik, pediatrician, Fellow of the Academy and public health pioneer, understanding that bad milk was a cause of summer diarrhea, opened a “milk station” at the Good Samaritan Dispensary in this City. That Dispensary, I have learned, was located at 75 Essex Street, corner of Broome Street. I have not gone downtown yet to see if the building still stands, but if it does, it ought to bear a plaque as a testament to Dr. Koplik's enterprise and vision.

But to return to 1989. The Program Committee chaired by Dr. Henry Barnett and superbly assisted by Dr. Jacqueline Messite, the Executive Secretary of the Committee on Public Health, have arranged an intellectual feast. You will hear from an absolutely splendid roster of speakers who will explore the many dimensions of the connection between nutrition and public health.